

Emai's Aspect-Causative Interaction*

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Talmy (2000) articulates a typology of lexicalization potentials for how verb roots incorporate semantic elements of aspect, causation, and their interaction. The latter, for instance, reveals three semantic types – stative (being in a state), inchoative (entering a state), and agentive (being put in a state), with verb roots cross-linguistically registering restricted combinations of types and achieving others via grammatical augmentation. As this typology unfolds, Talmy notes that languages often lexicalize posture and position events asymmetrically, although no clear boundary is evident and overlap might thus occur. For this paper, we explore how posture and position verbs manifest aspect-causative (A-C) interaction in the Edoid language Emai (Elugbe 1989, Williamson and Blench 2000). Typologically, Emai exhibits relatively strict SVO word order and employs verbs in series. Its intransitive posture verbs and transitive position verbs exhibit unmarked and marked syntactic constructions that reveal a shift from one A-C type (stative or agentive) to another (inchoative). To signal an inchoative change in orientation (“move up/down”) for a theme participant, each adds a second verb to a construction whose grammatical properties are then highly restrictive.

Transitive position verbs occur in unmarked and marked constructions. In unmarked constructions, the verbs *khuae* ‘raise’ (1a) and *gbe* ‘fell’ (1b) are preceded by an agent subject and followed by a theme direct object.

- (1) a. òjè khúáé ǒlì ùkòdò.¹
Oje raise the pot
‘Oje raised the pot.’

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¹ Orthographic conventions for Emai are consistent with those in Schaefer (1987) and Schaefer and Egbokhare (1999), where <ò> represents a lax mid-back vowel, <ǒ> a lax mid-front vowel, and <vb> a voiced bilabial approximant. High tone is marked by an acute accent, low tone by a grave accent and high downstep by an acute accent followed by an apostrophe.

- b. òjè gbé ọ́lì ọ̀ràn.
 Oje fell the tree
 ‘Oje felled the tree.’

Each position verb appears in a corresponding marked construction where its theme participant has entered or assumed a positional end state. This inchoative construction is formed by adding a verb in series (*nwu* with *khuae* in (2a) and *fi* with *gbe* in (2b)) and by changing word order so that the erstwhile direct object now precedes the position verb and follows the added construction verb.

- (2) a. òjè nwú ọ́lì ùkòdò khúáé.
 Oje pick.up the pot raise
 ‘Oje raised the pot up at arm’s length.’ / ‘Oje got the pot raised up.’
- b. òjè fí ọ́lì ọ̀ràn gbé.
 Oje drop the tree fell
 ‘Oje got the tree down (flat out).’ / ‘Oje felled the tree (down) flat out.’

Added construction verbs can also appear as the primary predicate of a simple clause, particularly in non-literal structures with body-part subjects or direct objects. *nwu* has the sense ‘pick up’ (3a-b) and *fi* the meaning ‘drop, dangle’ (3c-d). Each reflects movement and a corresponding orientation: “upward” for *nwu* and “downward” for *fi*.

- (3) a. òjè nwú úkpórán vbì òtòì.²
 Oje pick.up stick LOC ground
 ‘Oje picked up a stick on the ground.’
- b. òjè ọ̀ ọ́ nwù égbè.
 Oje SC C pick.up body
 ‘Oje is getting prepared.’
- c. òjè fí ọ̀ ọ́ vbì ọ̀.
 Oje drop foot CL LOC hole
 ‘Oje stepped into the hole.’
- d. áwé ísì òjè ọ̀ ọ́ fí.
 legs ASS Oje SC C drop
 ‘Oje’s legs are dangling.’

² Abbreviations used throughout this study include the following: ANT=anterior, ANTI=anticipative, ASS=associative, C=continuous, CL=change of location, CON=conative, D=displacement, F=factative, LOC=locative, NEG=negative, PF=positive focus, PR=prohibitive, SC=subject category, TEMP=temporal perspective.

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Marked constructions with position verbs reveal a stringent grammatical character. They require perfective tense/aspect (*òjè* completive present and *ójé* completive past (4a)), and reject imperfective continuous (4b).

- (4) a. *òjè / ójé nwú òlì ùkòdò khúáé.*
 Oje Oje pick.up the pot raise
 'Oje has raised up the pot.' / 'Oje raised up the pot.'
- b. * *òjè ò ó nwù òlì úkódó khùàè.*
 Oje SC C pick.up the pot raise
 'Oje is raising the pot up (at arm's length).'

Marked constructions do not accept any aspectual or temporal forms. For instance, they disallow particles for preverbal aspectualizers that access temporal phases of event onset (*óó'* CON 'go to' (5a)), postverbal temporal perspective (*léé* TEMP 'already' (5b)) as well as adjuncts of temporality (*òdè* 'yesterday' (5c)).

- (5) a. * *òjè óó' nwù òlì ùkòdò khúáé.*
 Oje CON pick.up the pot raise
 'Oje went to raise the pot up (at arm's length).'
- b. * *òjè nwú òlì ùkòdò khúáé léé.*
 Oje pick.up the pot raise TEMP
 'Oje already raised the pot up.'
- c. * *ójé nwú òlì ùkòdò khúáé òdè.*
 Oje pick.up the pot raise yesterday
 'Oje raised the pot up (at arm's length) yesterday.'

Marked constructions limit particles that bear on event assertion/polarity and speaker attitude toward event occurrence. They reject predicate negation and prohibition (6a-b) in addition to intentionality preverbs (*dóbò* 'mistakenly' (6c)).

- (6) a. * *òjè í ì nwù òlì úkódó khùàè.*
 Oje SC NEG pick.up the pot raise
 'Oje did not raise the pot up (at arm's length).'
- b. * *é è nwú òlì ùkòdò khúáé.*
 you PR pick.up the pot raise
 'Don't raise the pot up (at arm's length).'
- c. * *ójé dóbò nwú òlì ùkòdò khúáé.*
 Oje mistakenly pick.up the pot raise
 'Oje mistakenly raised the pot up (at arm's length).'

Intransitive posture verbs exhibit construction pairs highlighting their shift from stative to inchoative. In unmarked constructions with a stative character, *muzan* ‘stand’ and *mehen* ‘lie’ appear with a locative complement.

- (7) a. ólí ómó múzán-í vbì ìtébù.
the child stand-F LOC table
‘The child stood on the table.’
- b. ólí ómó méhén-í vbì ìtébù.
the child lie-F LOC table
‘The child lay on the table.’

Posture verbs also appear in marked constructions where body orientation of the subject referent has assumed a positional end state. Inchoative “stand up” requires *muzan* in series with the verb *daa* ‘raise’ (8a) and “lie down” demands *mehen* with the verb *dee* ‘lower’ in series (8b).

- (8) a. ólí ómó dáá múzán.
the child raise stand
‘The child stood up.’
- b. ólí ómó déé méhén.
the child lower lie
‘The child lay down.’

Verb forms in series with posture verbs can serve as the primary predicate of a simple clause. Transitive *daa* ‘raise’ occurs with a body-part complement, while *dee* ‘lower’ appears with or without a body-part complement (9a-b).

- (9) a. òjè ò ó dàà àgbàn.
Oje SC C raise chin
‘Oje is raising his chin.’ / ‘Oje is searching for a better view.’
- b. òjè déé ré / déé óbò ré.
Oje lower D lower hand D
‘Oje lowered himself / lowered his hand.’

Marked constructions with posture verbs exhibit severely restricted syntax. They permit perfective tense/aspect (ólí ómò completive present and ólí ómó completive past (10a)) but not imperfective continuous (10b).

- (10) a. ólí ómò / ólí ómó dáá múzán.
the child the child raise stand
‘The child has stood up.’ / ‘The child stood up.’

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- b. * ólí ómò ó ò dàá mùzán.
the child SC C raise stand
'The child is standing up.'

They do not permit aspectual and temporal grammatical forms: neither aspectualizer preverbs (óó' 'go to' (11a)), temporal perspective postverbal particles (léé 'already' (11c)), nor temporal adjuncts (òdè 'yesterday' (12d)).

- (11) a. * ólí ómò óó' dàá múzán.
the child CON raise stand
'The child went to stand up.'
- b. * ólí ómò dáá múzán léé.
the child raise stand TEMP
'The child stood up already.'
- c. * ólí ómó dáá múzán òdè.
the child raise stand yesterday
'The child stood up yesterday.'

As well, marked posture verb constructions do not permit the speaker to register polarity (negation and prohibition particles, (12a-b)) or attitude toward event occurrence (intentionality preverbs like dobò 'mistakenly' (12c)).

- (12) a. * ólí ómò í ì dàá mùzán.
the child SC NEG raise stand
'The child did not stand up.'
- b. * é è kè dáá múzán.
the child ANT raise stand
'Don't stand up anymore.'
- c. * ólí ómó dóbò dáá múzán.
the child mistakenly raise stand
'The child mistakenly stood up.'

Marked constructions do not seem constrained primarily by their position or posture verbs and their lexical properties. Rather, their stringent syntax appears to be a function of the inchoative construction. Position verbs in unmarked constructions, for example, entertain the range of grammatical forms rejected by their marked counterparts. They permit imperfective continuous tense/aspect (13a) as well as completive present and completive past (13b).

- (13) a. òjè ò ó khùàè òlì ùkòdò.
Oje SC C raise the pot
'Oje is raising the pot.'
- b. òjè / ójé khúáé òlì ùkòdò.
Oje Oje raise the pot
'Oje has raised the pot.' / 'Oje raised the pot.'

Unmarked position-verb constructions allow grammatical forms denoting an event's aspectual and temporal properties. They accept preverbs that access aspectual phases of event onset (*óó'* (14a)), postverbal particles of temporal perspective (*léé* (14b)), and adjuncts of temporality (*òdè* (14c)).

- (14) a. òjè óó' khùàè òlì ùkòdò.
Oje CON raise the pot
'Oje went to raise the pot.'
- b. òjè khúáé òlì ùkòdò léé.
Oje raise the pot TEMP
'Oje has finished raising the pot.' / 'Oje already raised the pot.'
- c. ójé khúáé òlì úkódó òdè.
Oje raise the pot yesterday
'Oje raised the pot yesterday.'

They also admit forms for event assertion/polarity and speaker attitude toward event occurrence. Predicate negation and prohibition auxiliaries (15a-b) as well as preverbs of intentionality (*dóbò* 'mistakenly' (15c)) are acceptable.

- (15) a. òjè í ì khùàè òlì ùkòdò.
Oje SC NEG raise the pot
'Oje did not raise the pot.'
- b. é è khúáé òlì ùkòdò.
you PR raise the pot
'Don't raise the pot.'
- c. ójé dóbò khúáé òlì ùkòdò.
Oje mistakenly raise the pot
'Oje mistakenly raised the pot.'

Unmarked position-verb constructions and their posture neighbors thus exhibit far less restrictive behavior in contrast to the stringent syntactic behavior of marked inchoative constructions. This suggests that the inchoative's rigid

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grammatical character derives from a structural template more complex than the lexical projection of a posture or position verb. What is the nature of that template? In the African context, one might look to the frequently noted consecutive construction. Niger-Congo languages often signal a temporal sequence of actions by marking the second verb in series overtly: Nupe's *ci* 'and' (16a; Hyman 1971) and Tswana's *à/CONS* (16b; Creissels 2000).

- (16) a. u lá dùku ci bé.
he take pot and come
'He took the pot and came.'
- b. k̩̀-ìlẹ̀ t̀̀rópó-ng k-à-réká dítlhàkú.
SM.1S-go.ANT town-LOC SM.1S-CONS-buy C18.shoes
'I went to town and bought shoes.'

Emai exhibits no formal marking of consecutive constructions. However, it does show constructions with a similar function that also reference a temporal sequence of events (17a). Functional consecutives and transitive inchoative constructions exhibit some commonality. Both manifest a surface syntax consisting of NP1-V1-NP2-V2 and observe a linear-order constraint. Functional consecutive constructions strictly limit syntactic ordering of their verbs (17b) and position verbs never precede their construction verb in inchoative sentences (17c).

- (17) a. òjè d̩́ é mà é.
Oje buy yam eat
'Oje bought yam and ate it.'
- b. *òjè é é mà d̩́.
Oje eat yam buy
'Oje ate yam and bought it.'
- c. *òjè khúáé ǒlì ùkòdò nwú.
Oje raise the pot pick.up
'Oje raised the pot and picked it up.'

Moreover, inchoative constructions reflect the orientation of their theme participant through verb selection. Contrasting orientations of the repositioned theme correlate with distinct verbs in series: *nwu khuae* 'raise up' and *fi gbe* 'fell down' among position verbs and *daa muzan* 'stand up' and *dee mehen* 'lie down' among posture verbs. Alternative verb combinations are disallowed; one cannot for example pair *fi* with *khuae* or *dee* with *muzan*.

Emai's functional consecutives and positional transitive constructions are distinct in other respects, however. Functional consecutives deconstruct in a strict

fashion. In a mono-verbal clause, each verb of the consecutive is found with the construction's grammatical subject and direct object.

- (18) òjè dé émà / òjè é émà.
Oje buy yam Oje eat yam
'Oje bought yam.' / 'Oje ate yam.'

Transitive inchoative constructions do not deconstruct consistently. Although V2 from (19a) is obviously compatible with its preceding noun phrase (19b), V1 most often is not (19c). Simple transitive clauses composed of *fi* and the theme *ólí óràn* 'the tree' from inchoative constructions are ungrammatical. *fi* allows only the meaning 'throw' in simple transitive clauses with theme direct objects (19d).

- (19) a. òjè fí ólí óràn gbé.
Oje drop the tree fell
'Oje got the tree down (flat out).' / 'Oje fell the tree (down) flat out.'
- b. òjè gbé ólí óràn.
Oje fell the tree
'Oje felled the tree.'
- c. * òjè fí ólí óràn.
Oje drop the tree
'Oje dropped the tree.'
- d. òjè fí ólí úkpòrán.
Oje threw the stick
'Oje threw the stick.'

As an alternative, one might consider the inchoative construction as a classic resultative, which also exhibits the surface syntax NP1-V1-NP2-V2, and seek to explicate V2 as intransitive. Emai has few resultatives, but they have been noted in analyses of other West African languages (Durie 1997). NP2 in resultative constructions functions as grammatical direct object for V1 but logical subject for V2 (20a). And like consecutives, the resultative deconstructs strictly (20b-c).

- (20) a. òjè hóó ólí úkpùn fúán.
Oje wash the cloth clean
'Oje washed the cloth clean.'
- b. òjè hóó ólí úkpùn.
Oje wash the cloth
'Oje washed the cloth.'

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- c. ólí úkpùn fúán-ì.
the cloth be.clean-F
'The cloth is clean.'

By analogy, one might construe a V2 like *khuae* in an inchoative construction as intransitive. ólì ùkòdò 'the pot' would then serve as *khuae*'s logical subject, where English translation in (21a) suggests this analysis. A major obstacle for this interpretation is that *khuae*, like other inherently transitive position verbs, does not occur as a simple intransitive (21b). Moreover, it is important to recognize that Emai has no syntactic passive construction whereby *khuae*, and others of its ilk, might become syntactically intransitive.

- (21) a. òjè nwú ólì ùkòdò khúáé.
Oje pick.up the pot raise
'Oje picked up the pot and it raised up (at arm's length).'
- b. *ólì ùkòdò khúáé-ì.
the pot raise-F
'The pot was / got raised.'

Additional facts with a body-part subject show that an inchoative construction with a position verb like *khuae* requires co-event expression by a verb in series. That is, *khuae* in (22a) requires the verb in series *tín* 'fly' (22b) in order to convey the notion 'become erect.' *khuae* alone is not sufficient (22c).

- (22) a. úkpégé^lé ísì òjè tìn khúáé.
penis ASS Oje fly raise
'Oje's penis became erect.' / 'Oje's penis flew up.'
- b. ólí áfíánmì ò ó tìn.
the bird SC C fly
'The bird is flying.'
- c. *úkpégé^lé ísì òjè khúáé-ì.
penis ASS Oje raise-F
'Oje's penis became erect. / Oje's penis raised up.'

Transitivity and word order properties thus suggest that marked constructions for position and posture verbs do not clearly align with widely recognized functional consecutive or resultative constructions. What about other grammatical properties? Let's consider additional facets of functional consecutives, beginning with tense/aspect. Functional consecutives accept perfective tense/aspect (*òjè* completive present and *óje* completive past (23a)) but reject imperfective continuous (23b), as did marked inchoative constructions.

- (23) a. òjè / ójé dḗ émà é.
 Oje Oje buy yam eat
 ‘Oje has bought yam and eaten it.’ / ‘Oje bought yam and ate it.’
- b. * òjè ò ó dḗ èmá è.
 Oje SC C buy yam eat
 ‘Oje is buying yam and eating it.’

Emai’s functional consecutive constructions allow a range of aspectual and temporal forms. They admit aspectualizer preverbs accessing event phases (*óó* (24a)), postverbal temporal perspective particles (*léé* (24b)) and temporal adjuncts (*òdè* (24c)). Recall that inchoative constructions accepted none of these.

- (24) a. òjè óó dḗ émà é.
 Oje CON buy yam eat
 ‘Oje went to buy yam and eat it.’
- b. òjè dḗ émà é léé.
 Oje buy yam eat TEMP
 ‘Oje already bought yam and ate it.’
- c. ójé dḗ émà é òdè.
 Oje buy yam eat yesterday
 ‘Oje bought yam and ate it yesterday.’

And unlike inchoatives, functional consecutive constructions permit particles that bear on event assertion/polarity (predicate negation and the prohibition (25a-b)) and speaker attitude toward event occurrence (intentionality preverbs of the type *dobò* ‘mistakenly’ (25c)).

- (25) a. òjè í ì dḗ èmá è.
 Oje SC NEG buy yam eat
 ‘Oje did not buy yam and eat it.’
- b. é è dḗ émà é.
 you PR buy yam eat
 ‘Don’t buy yam and eat it.’
- c. ójé dóbò dḗ émà é.
 Oje mistakenly buy yam eat
 ‘Oje mistakenly bought yam and ate it.’

We thus conclude that functional consecutive constructions and marked position-verb constructions (as well as marked posture verb constructions) are not

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of the same grammatical type. Building on this, we turn to the consecutive construction's temporal "and then" interpretation. Emai reveals semantic relations other than temporal sequence for constructions that might otherwise appear to be functional consecutives. Temporal sequence fails to capture their semantic identity. For example, Emai has serial constructions exhibiting purposive (26a) or extensive (26b) relations. The first verb event in the purposive is construed as actualized while the second is not (*hua ka* 'carry to dry'), whereas both verb events in the extensive are actualized (*vié mēhen* 'cry until asleep').

- (26) a. òjè húá ìwàwà ká.
Oje carry cooking.pots dry
'Oje carried cooking pots to dry.' /
* 'Oje carried cooking pots and they dried.'
- b. òjè víé mēhén.
Oje cry sleep
'Oje cried until asleep.' / * 'Oje cried and then slept.'

Using this richer set of semantic relations, we suggest that position and posture inchoatives are more akin to extensive constructions than to purposives. The latter reveals an actualization pattern of events not shown by marked position and posture constructions. That is, Emai inchoative constructions express entering a state of posture or position by incorporating an orientation-bearing verb whose actualization is required over a temporal extent that concludes with a change in postured or positioned state: "event X until end state Y." Hence, the marked inchoative constructions in (2a) and (8a) might be rendered explicitly and symmetrically as 'Oje moved the pot upward until it entered a raised state' and 'Oje moved himself upward until he entered a standing state'. It is this extensive ('until') parameter that precludes grammatical augmentation by forms bearing on event aspectuality (e.g. *óó'* 'go to') and temporality (e.g. *òdè* 'yesterday'). Apparently, it is also this parameter that rules out expression of polarity (negation and prohibition) and speaker attitude (*dobó* 'mistakenly'). One of the major tasks confronting further investigation of Emai concerns the identification of semantic relation types in serial constructions (e.g. temporal consecutive, resultative, purposive, extensive) and how each correlates with a particular set of grammatical properties. This applies in particular to events of position and posture not explicitly considered in this paper and to broader syntactic issues of construction verb transitivity as it relates to body-part complements. More importantly, we need to clarify the principles that constrain semantic relation types in the overall serial verb system and that link individual types to specific syntactic patterns.

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